

COLLEGE PREPARATION TIMELINE

9th Grade

- Meet with your guidance counselor and tell him or her that you want to attend college.
- Together develop a plan that will put you on the college track. Anticipate that you will have to go beyond the minimum requirements to graduate high school.
- Take the most challenging course-load you can handle, such as Advanced or Honors courses.
- Establish a strong GPA.
- Get involved in school and community organizations.

10th Grade

- Continue taking challenging classes.
- Maintain a strong GPA or improve on the one you established in 9th Grade!
- Continue with school involvement.
- Try to attend a college preparatory program (check with your guidance counselor for opportunities).

11th Grade

- Maintain GPA or improve on the one you established in 10th Grade!
- Take college preparatory classes (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Dual Enrollment etc.).
- Take the PSAT in the fall to qualify for National Merit Scholarships and identify strengths and weaknesses before taking the SAT.
- Begin studying for the SAT/ACT, do practice tests online and take an SAT/ACT prep course.
- Think about why you want to attend college and what you might want to major/minor in:
 - What do you really want to do in 5 years from now? Are there any professional jobs that are appealing to you?
 - What academics do you enjoy? What do you like to do now?
 - Do you have any special aptitudes besides music?
 - Do you have any idea what you might want to study in college? If so, what? Any minors?
 - What is your GPA?
 - What is/are your PSAT or SAT score(s)?
 - What is your class ranking?
 - Have you visited any colleges? Which ones?
- Begin college search process:
- Think about what type of college you would want to attend.
 - *Size:* small (<5,000 students), medium (5,000-15,000 students), large (15,000-30,000), and extra large (>30,000).
 - *Setting:*
 - Urban or Rural
 - Climate
 - How far away from home, geographic region
 - *Type of school:* liberal arts, technical, private, public, HBCU (historically black college or university)
 - *Programs of study offered:* Business, Pre-Med, Pre-Law, Engineering, Education, etc.
 - *Extracurricular activities:* internships, study abroad, clubs and organizations

- *Fit*: Do you feel comfortable on the campus? Can you see yourself spending four years there? **(These questions can only really be answered by visiting a college campus!)**
- Research schools online, at the library, at your school's college counseling office and local college fairs. You can also talk with Dr D or others you know who attended or are attending these schools.
- Narrow your choices down to 5-10 colleges.
- Visit as many college campuses on your list as you can! Try to schedule a visit at a time when school is in session and students are around. Ask the same questions at each college you visit. Take notes and pictures. Visit options include:
 - Information session and campus tour
 - Overnight program
 - Interview
 - Open House or Preview Weekend
 - Visit a friend
- Take the SAT/ACT in the spring.
- Step up to leadership positions in your extracurricular activities.
- Try to attend a summer college preparatory program.
- Research and begin to apply for scholarships. Every little bit helps. Check out the following resources:
 - Guidance counselor
 - Religious or civic organizations
 - Your parents' employer
 - Newspaper
 - Internet

12th Grade

- Maintain strong GPA. Colleges will see your midyear and final grades.
- Continue taking challenging courses i.e. math, science, foreign language, etc., at the college prep level. Your senior year should be your most challenging.
- Take the SAT/ACT again in the fall to improve your scores.
- Continue college visits.
- Narrow your choices to 3-5 schools.
- Compile applications for each school; check deadlines and application costs.
- Obtain 2-3 letters of recommendation from your guidance counselor, teacher(s), coach, etc. As a courtesy make your requests a month in advance. Be sure to give them an idea of your academic credentials (GPA, rank in class, Honor Society, etc.), music credentials (include MYA, all-state, etc.), after school and non-academic activities (church/synagogue, volunteer), any special honors received, and any interests you have that make you different.
- Write your application essays with care and have them critiqued by others; they are your on-paper interview.
- Submit your applications by December so that your holiday break can be stress free.
- If you wish to pursue a music major, prepare your audition pieces beginning in the summer before Senior Year. Please note that some schools have a required audition list to select from.
- Continue applying for scholarships.
- Have your parents submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January.
- Relax and enjoy your senior year!